

**Town Meeting Coordinating Committee**  
**Minutes for Monday, June 25, 2012, 3:00 – 5:30 PM**  
**First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

Present: Peggy Roberts, Mary Streeter, Melissa Perot, Nonny Burack, Patricia Holland, Alan Powell, Carol Gray, Aaron Hayden. Also attending: John Musante, then Harrison Gregg.

**Audio Subcommittee:** Peggy reviewed the June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of TMCC's Audio Subcommittee with Kris Pacunas, Brian Ecclestone, Jim Lescault, Aaron Hayden, Hilda and Louis Greenbaum, and Larry Orloff. She reported that Larry Orloff demonstrated his portable sound system, Brian Ecclestone described the type used by the schools and Kris Pacunas spoke about the town's portable unit. It's possible that IT could obtain additional equipment for the hearing impaired through that department.

**Meeting with Town Manager John Musante:** John Musante said he had already met with Kris Pacunas about the sound system. The group discussed the TMCC budget with John. He said \$300 is available each year and bills should be brought to his assistant, Debra Roussel. In FY12 we spent \$150 to hire a school bus for one bus tour. It was agreed that TMCC would prepare a budget proposal.

With regard to Dependent Care, John said this year any reimbursements would have to come out of TMCC's remaining budget of \$150. Carol stated that the former Town Manager, Larry Shaffer, had told TMCC \$1000 was set aside annually for dependent care expenses, which could be divided among TM members who had submitted receipts. John said there was never a budget line for that expense. Larry had said it was in General Government Funds. Melissa urged John to find a way to meet the current request for reimbursement. Aaron said the Select Board would take up the issue. John invited TMCC to submit a proposal for Dependent Care.

Peggy asked if John had concerns about town meeting. He said they were covered recently in the Select Board's report. She noted the fine line speakers face between explaining an issue and advocating for it. John thought that an issue for the moderator. Nonny suggested that town officials sit in the front row of the auditorium rather than up in back when articles come up on which they are experts. John said he would take that suggestion up with the staff. Another issue TMCC had received comments about was, should the Town Manager vote. John said yes. Although according to the Town Charter, the Town Manager is a ExOfficio member of Town Meeting, Nonny and others thought a non-elected person should not vote. Mary thought the perception of fairness was lessened by his voting. She suggested having a special informational session to discuss zoning issues. John said he was open to a session on budget including Finance Director Sandy Pooler and another on zoning including the Planning Board. Peggy thanked John for coming.

**Continued Discussion of Annual Town Meeting:** Peggy suggested we consider preparing guidelines for making amendments to article motions as there had been a problem in this last town meeting.

**Town Meeting Member Dependent Care:** Carol said we did not support her adequately over the childcare issue. Mary made the following motion: That Peggy write a letter to John Musante thanking him for coming and asking him to reimburse fully any request for dependent care since the TMCC had promised that was possible, and send a copy to the Select Board. Second: Patricia Holland. Voted unanimously.

**Project Priorities and Scheduling of Meetings:** We discussed meeting soon to follow up on current issues, before work begins for Special Fall Town Meeting, however the earliest date possible for the attendance of all members was Monday, August 27.

**Minutes of June 4 and 13:** Discussion postponed.

**Meeting with Town Moderator Harrison Gregg:**

When Harrison Gregg arrived, Peggy began the discussion by noting what an excellent job he did at the Orientation meeting. She went on to describe the meeting of the Audio Subcommittee and noted that it may be possible to get better control of lighting in the auditorium so the light doesn't shine directly in his eyes or on the projection screen. Brian Ecclestone had said that an addition to the control system was possible if funds were available. Harrison noted he now has more trouble hearing and also speaking clearly.

Mary noted the lack of civility at the last town Meeting and asked if he would deal with requests for extra time in presentations by allowing it "without objection." A TM member could object. He agreed to the request.

On the matter of calling on people by alternating between those holding red cards and those green cards, Harrison said he never liked the cards. Carol pointed out that in the discussion of Art. 25, on rezoning in North Amherst, he called on 24 people in favor of it and only 8 against, and she recommended he should alternate according to card colors. He said he was not biased. He also defended his right to call on a person who would likely call the question. He favored Mary's suggestion to have TMCC call a preliminary meeting on zoning. Carol objected to his having granted the Town Manager extra time and asked him to follow the rules on time limits.

Peggy raised the problem of getting TM to start on time, and Nonny explained the new check-in people were unfamiliar with people coming in. Nonny also noted that three people did not check in because of mobility issues, and asked the moderator to remind people they must do that. Peggy raised the issue of help with the overhead projector and microphone. Alan suggested we should advise people to bring someone to help. On the question of a consent calendar, Harrison said he supported it. He also acknowledged the difficulties with the member who made an amendment to an article, and explained he had not been feeling well.

Mary asked he if would reconsider the method for conducting the TMCC elections, noting his objection to the proposal for locating the voting booth as TMCC had suggested last fall. Harrison said his concern was to have more people run for TMCC. Melissa as a new TM member acknowledged her disappointment with this year's Town Meeting, noting too much advocacy from town staff and not clear enough explanation. Peggy thanked Harrison for coming.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Submitted by Patricia Holland, Clerk

**Documents Distributed:**

Agenda

Minutes for June 6<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup>

List for meeting with Town Manager and Town Moderator

Issues & Concerns Received – Annual TM 2012

Approved October 2, 2012